



Informal Economies Recovery Project

A project jointly implemented by the
International Labour Organization (ILO)
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)



**UN COVID-19 Response
and Recovery Fund**

#RecoverBetterTogether

Nisha

Director of the Office and
UNESCO Representative to the
Pacific States

It is with much pleasure
that I write this note
not just on behalf of my
Organization, UNESCO,
but also in the name of the
wonderful partnership
that we have with our
fellow organizations –
IFAD, ILO, UNDP and a
range of national partners.



The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed how large the
informal economies are in the developing countries
and small island developing states (SIDS). In the
SIDS the typically small entrepreneurial efforts of
the individuals and households are the norm. Their
formalization may bring them into the formal
economy but it may not necessarily lead to economic
growth until specific measures are put in place for
their recovery.

Cultural and creative industries have been providing
employment and economic development to all
the SIDS in the Pacific. These micro-industries,
however, are so small and dependent on the tourism
sector that income and employment from them is
precarious. A large number of artists – of traditional or
contemporary art forms – are dependent on freelance
work. No wonder that with the border closures, these
micro-industries either ceased to exist or as other
freelancers, have been struggling to survive.

This joint programme, “Inclusive Economic Recovery
through Sustainable Enterprises in the Informal
Economies of Fiji, Palau, Tonga and Vanuatu” is
unique. In particular, for bringing different expertise
of the participating UN organizations to address an
issue that is so pervasive and yet invisible in the policy
and legislative domains. UNESCO is assisting recovery,
by cooperating with the ILO for the application of the
Recommendation concerning the Status of the Artist
(1980) and the UNESCO Convention on the Protection
and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions
(2005) in support of organizing workers. It aims at
facilitate ResiliArt debates, which aim to shed light
on the impact of COVID-19 on artists, performers and
other actors in the cultural and creative industries
sector at the national and regional levels to generate
policy-attention. and updated its global database on
feature films. [Read more](#)

FEATURE STORY

Supporting private sector resilience in the Pacific



The COVID-19 pandemic is far
from being over, as proven by
Fiji, which after almost one
year of relaxed restrictions and
no community transmission
has experienced a surge of
virus cases and a new wave of
lockdowns since April 2021.

Even the coronavirus-free
localities, such as some island
countries and territories in the
Pacific, are still being affected by
border closures, disrupted value
chains and reduced incomes.

Various restrictions, mandatory
'COVID-safe' measures and
periodic recurrence of infection

are likely going to be a part of
our lives in months and possibly
years ahead. Business continuity
planning is critical in times of
crisis - and in anticipation of
such. For enterprises to survive,
they must be able to adapt
their operations to the new
environment.

Large informal sectors in
Pacific Island countries mean
entrepreneurs and workers
are especially vulnerable, often
lacking social protection and
capacity to withstand natural
disasters and economic shocks.

[Read more](#)



ENTREPRENEURS JOURNEY

**Irami Buli - An 'Artrepreneur'
On a Mission**

Irami Buli is a well-known name in
Fiji's cultural and creative industry.
A self-described 'ARTrepreneur'
specializing in post-modern art,
Irami has behind him decades
of experience and has had his
work exhibited both locally
and internationally. In 2014, he
travelled to Sydney, to exhibit at
the National Maritime Museum
of Australia, following a voyage
across the Pacific highlighting
Ocean Conservation. [Read more](#)

Q&A

'We Have the Power to Change Lives'

This month, the **UN Resident Coordinator for the Fiji Multi-Country Office**, **Sanaka Samarasinha** sat down with us to discuss Pacific informal economies. In this in-depth interview, he speaks to Sanya Ruggiero about the unique challenges faced by the informal sector, and how we cannot hope to build back better from the pandemic without addressing the massive gaps within this often 'invisible' space. [Read more](#)

“

The very fact that there is a large informal sector indicates that many individuals and businesses aren't able to compete in a regular government-regulated market. The barriers of entry are high such as capital, education, skills, network, access to information.”

Sanaka Samarasinha
UN Resident Coordinator for
the Fiji Multi-Country Office



Project Activities and Stories

One voice: supporting Fijian performing artists influence national covid-19 recovery

On April 15th, the UN in the Pacific marked World Art Day by convening, for the first time, an interactive gathering with representatives from twenty-two Fijian Dance Companies and Groups. [Read More](#)

Creative Entrepreneurs and Artists Dialogue with UN Influencers

Having access to policy and decision makers is a major challenge for owners of micro and small enterprises, including those in the informal sector. [Read More](#)

Progress in organizing the informal economy in the Pacific

The Informal Economies Recovery Project is providing informal sector workers in the creative and agriculture sector an identity, a collective voice and opportunity to influence national COVID-19 recovery policies. [Read More](#)

1,045 informal sector workers and entrepreneurs supported to access COVID-19 grant

The ILO in collaboration with its Bureau for Workers Activities (ACTRAV) provided technical assistance to the Tonga Public Service association (PSA) to support informal sector workers and entrepreneurs in the creative and agriculture sector access the government grants. [Read More](#)

Partner Spotlight



Olympia E. Morei-Remengesau

Director/Curator, Belau National Museum, Palau

Olympia, or Pia for short, is the current Director and Curator of Palau's Belau National Museum. She speaks to us about she believes the COVID pandemic has been a sort of 'blessing in disguise' for the cultural and creative industry. [Read More](#)

Meet the Team

Edward Bernard

Project Coordinator, ILO

Edward's role is to manage the delivery of ILO outputs and ensure coordination among all UN agencies, so the overall project objectives are delivered in target countries. He has been working for the ILO since 2008 and has worked in two major ILO projects and spent 8 years in the Programming section of the ILO supporting country and regional level activities. Edward's areas of expertise are in youth employment, entrepreneurship development and disaster recovery. He states his most memorable moment in his professional career was being invited to the ILO headquarters in Geneva, to receive a recognition award from the ILO Director General in 2019, for a disaster recovery project in Vanuatu. Prior to joining the ILO, Edward worked for the Integrated Human Resource Development Programme (IHRDP) of the Fiji Government. For his education, he attended the University of the South Pacific (USP) and Marist Brothers High School.



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